

SALT PILOT PROJECT: REPORT OF FINDINGS

BRIEFING PAPER

Prepared for the

JULY 2003 TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION MEETING

Prepared by: Rico Baroga, Maintenance Program Delivery Manager

Reviewed by: Chris Christopher, State Maintenance Engineer

Approved by: John Conrad, Assistant Secretary for Engineering and Regional Operations

PURPOSE:

This is an informational presentation regarding the findings of a 2003-03 evaluation of salt (sodium chloride) use for the control of snow and ice on highways.

ACTION/OUTCOME:

The Commission will not be required to take any action. The expected outcome is an understanding of this evaluation's findings. These findings will be useful in making future policy decisions regarding snow and ice control activities.

BACKGROUND:

In the late 1980's, WSDOT discontinued the use of sodium chloride as a snow and ice control tool in favor of liquid, corrosion-inhibited anti-icing chemicals. The reasons for this discontinuation included concerns over corrosion to motor vehicles and bridges, potential adverse environmental impacts, and pressure from the Washington State Legislature. The relatively low cost of sodium chloride, the continued use of sodium chloride by the majority of other state DOT's, and questions about actual corrosion reduction from alternative chemicals prompted this evaluation.

DISCUSSION:

During the winter of 2002-03, some sections of highway were selected where sodium chloride was the sole chemical used for snow and ice control. Similar sections of highway were selected where corrosion-inhibited chemicals were the sole chemicals used for snow and ice control. Corrosion levels, environmental impacts, operations costs, and Level of Service were compared between the "salt" sections and the "corrosion-inhibited sections. A draft report of the findings is currently being circulated within WSDOT for review and comment. The draft findings of the evaluation will be discussed at the July 16, 2003 Transportation Commission meeting. After completion of review/comment, copies of the final report will be provided to Transportation Commissioners.

For additional information, contact Rico Baroga, WSDOT Maintenance Office, (360) 705-7864.